

Quality Counts for Kids Task Force Meeting

September 20, 2004

Task Force Members Attendance: Task Force Chair: Ann Terrell-Milwaukee Affiliate, NBCDI Board of Directors, Mary Babula-Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Gershia Coggs-Child Care Providers Helper, Shelley Cousin-Wisconsin Head Start Association, Dave Edie-UW-Extension Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership, Lisa Furseth-Wisconsin Community Action Program, Tammy Hammell-Knowledge Learning Corporation, Dana Harmel-Wisconsin Family Child Care Association Representative, Jane Ilgen-Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project, Laura Klingelhoets-Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association Representative, Sandy Leibfried-Southwest Wisconsin CCR&R, Joyce Mallory-Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Jose Martinez-United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., Carol Maurer-4C Community Coordinated Child Care, M. Judy Mays-Dusk 2 Dawn Child Care, Mary Motquin-Intertribal Child Care Council, Mike Poma-Milwaukee County Department of Human Services, Jane Robinson-The Registry, Barb Schuler-Wisconsin Technical College System Office, Kari Stroede-Satellite Family Child Care, Lisa Turnbull-Sawyer County Department of Human Services

Task Force Staff Attendance: Department of Workforce Development Staff: Alan Sweet, Kath McGurk, Linda Leonhart, Jane Penner-Hoppe, Department of Health and Family Services Staff: Julia Strong, Cinda Jones, Department of Public Instruction: Jill Haglund

Task Force Early Childhood Community Experts: Pam Boulton-UW Milwaukee, Diane Adams, Mary Roach and Jason Bierbrauer-UW-Extension Research Partnership, Christine Breunig-4-C Madison

Task Force Visitors: Michelle Bethke, Penny Chase, Connie Colussy, Pat Hernandez, Rhonda Mitchell, Carmen Rivers, Patrick Steliga, Megan Vinje, Carrie Volenberg

Call to Order

Ann Terrell, Chair of the *Quality Counts for Kids* Task Force called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. Jane Penner-Hoppe provided a brief message to the Task Force on behalf of JoAnna Richard from the Department of Workforce Development.

- It is critical to stay on task and make decisions that will achieve the goals of our agenda. A majority of votes is necessary for a recommendation to be made, and without a majority of votes, a recommendation cannot be sent to the Governor's Office. No additional meetings before the Public Hearings will be scheduled for the Task Force. Decisions will need to be made today. Jane also passed on JoAnna's message of "Thank You" to the Task Force Members for their time and effort in developing a Quality Indicators Rating System and to Ann Terrell for her strong leadership of this effort.

Ann also thanked Task Force Members for their positive responses to the correspondence that she sent on Thursday, September 16, 2004 regarding the need of Task Force Members to make final decisions at the September 20th Task Force Meeting.

Ann provided a brief review of the Task Force charge as indicated by Governor Doyle: "To help develop a rating system that will give child care providers incentives to go above and beyond the basic standards of quality". Ann asked for a review of the meeting minutes from the September 13, 2004 Task Force Meeting. Sandy Leibfried moved and Jane Ilgen seconded that the minutes of the meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Quality Indicator Rating Scale- Group Child Care Centers

Alan Sweet from the DWD Child Care Section provided an overview of the Group Center Quality Indicator Rating Scale. Tiers one and two are based on meeting set criteria, tiers three, four and five are reached by combined point value. Tier 2 status must be attained before any quality points can be awarded.

Discussion by Task Force Members led to several conclusions:

- Tiers must be set to encourage programs to demonstrate movement toward higher quality.
- Tiers must support basic health and safety requirements.
- Wisconsin currently has strong licensing requirements as compared to many other states. The licensing threshold is a first step in moving towards quality.

Several questions were raised:

- How many programs will not be able to reach tier two due to program regulatory compliance issues?
- Should programs that are not in regulatory compliance be eligible for the child care subsidy program?
- Should training and technical assistance be concentrated and/or targeted to programs at level two, to move these programs to provide higher quality experiences for children?

Tier 2 (Regulatory Compliance)

Julia Strong from DHFS-Bureau of Regulation and Licensing provided a handout to Task Force Members that included a working DRAFT Definition of “Regulatory Compliance”. Task Force Members reviewed the definition and the percentage of programs that would be considered not in Regulatory Compliance was discussed. DHFS has estimated that approximately 25 percent of licensed group center programs may be considered “Not in Regulatory Compliance”. Currently 7 to 9 percent of licensed group center programs have received an Enforcement Action. The definition of Regulatory Compliance has two components: Enforcement Actions and Serious Non-Compliance. This broader definition for regulatory compliance could include more programs than only those that received an enforcement action.

Task Force Members discussed the need to establish a set time frame for the follow-up review of programs that received a serious non-compliance. Task Force Members indicated agreement that the Regulatory Compliance documents provided by DHFS/BRL would serve as Principles for establishment of Regulatory Compliance. Implementation issues and regulatory compliance issues must be developed together to ensure that policy interpretations are applied accurately and consistently.

Dave Edie provided information on research that had been completed by the Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership and by Deborah Vandell of the NICHD Study, indicating that 10 to 15 percent of child care programs were of the poorest quality. Task Force Members discussed the difference in percentages, and how this might affect the affordability of the Quality Rating System. Recognizing that a smaller percentage of programs might be at Tier 1 than previously estimated will be critical when setting the base.

Carol Maurer moved to accept Tier 2 of the Quality Indicators Rating Scale to include the component of Regulatory Compliance and to use the definition of Regulatory Compliance as a guiding principle. Lisa Turnbull seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tiers 3, 4 and 5: Combined Point Values

- Teacher Qualifications (maximum of 7 points)

Dave Edie provided a Revised Option for Teacher Qualifications for Group Child Care Centers document which attempts to measure the percentage of classrooms staffed by qualified teachers. The goal is to have a reasonable saturation (or critical mass) of qualified teachers. Assumptions:

- 1.) Quality improves when a higher percentage of classrooms have qualified teachers, and
- 2.) Quality improves as educational qualifications of teachers increase.

This revised approach to creating a quality indicator based on the percentage of classroom staffed by qualified teachers was developed as a response to the concern voiced by Task Force Members that programs did not always serve children at the level designated by their licensed capacity. Task Force Members agreed that this model kept the data collection simpler. Counting the number of classrooms was easier.

Task Force Member discussion included the clarification that lead teachers in licensed group programs have the requirement of a high school degree or the equivalent, and that a lead teacher with an unrelated bachelors degree is also required to complete two courses in early education.

The following licensed group child care center Teacher Qualifications and points assigned were recognized by Task Force Members:

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| 1 point | 25% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with 6 or more early childhood education credits or a CDA. |
| 2 points | 50% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with 6 or more early childhood education credits or a CDA. |
| 3 points | 25% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with an Associate degree related to early childhood education or a Bachelor's degree. |
| 4 points | 100% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with 6 or more early childhood education credits or a CDA. |
| 5 points | 50% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with an Associate degree related to early childhood education or a Bachelor's degree. |
| 6 points | 100% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with an Associate degree related to early childhood education or a Bachelor's degree. |
| 7 points | 100% of the classrooms in the center have a teacher with a Bachelor's degree related to early childhood education (or higher). |

Note: These point values are non-cumulative.

Dave Edie moved to accept the Revised Option for Teacher Qualifications for Group Child Care Centers as a category of the Quality Indicators Rating Scale. Joyce Mallory seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Director Qualifications (maximum of 7 points)

Dave Edie provided a Recommendation for Director Qualifications for Group Child Care Centers. Task Force Members discussed the Child Care Administrator's Credential, and how this credential relates to individuals with degrees in early education. Discussion took place on the components of the Administrator's Credential and how program directors and administrators benefit from the credential. Concern was voiced regarding the option to make the Administrator's Credential or a set component of the coursework a requirement, and how this could overload the current higher educational system. Task Force Members discussed the value of flexibility of training and technical assistance offered by some larger child care programs whose assistant directors have the Credential. Ultimately it was decided that the goal of the quality criteria is to have directors and administrators who understand quality child care practices and have strong business knowledge. Task Force Members discussed the value of related degrees vs. unrelated degrees in the early childhood workforce.

The following licensed group child care center Director Qualifications and points assigned were recognized by Task Force Members:

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| 1 point | Administrator Credential |
| 3 points | Associate degree (related) or Bachelor's degree (unrelated) |
| 4 points | Administrator Credential AND EITHER Associate degree (related) or Bachelor's degree (unrelated) |
| 5 points | Bachelor's degree (related) |
| 6 points | Bachelor's degree (related) AND Administrator Credential |
| 7 points | Graduate degree (related) |

Note: These point values are non-cumulative.

Joyce Mallory moved to accept the Director Qualifications for Group Child Care Centers with the addition of the word “unrelated” next to bachelors degree when not related to early childhood as a category of the Quality Indicator Rating Scale. Lisa Turnbull seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Learning Environment/Curriculum (maximum of 10 points)

Task Force Members discussed the value of a documented quality improvement assessment process. Discussion centered on whether a specific quality rating scale level should be used for determination of points awarded, or if the process itself should be the quality indicator? The final decision was that the development of a written quality improvement plan was the goal of the criteria, and that the plan becomes the tool for moving towards higher quality. Further discussion centered on the difference between a self-assessment and having an outside, trained, reliable entity complete the assessment. It was determined that both a self assessment and an outside assessment can be quality indicators and that the points awarded for the quality criteria component will reflect the assessment process used. Discussion also centered on the law that child care programs provide an environment that is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Task Force Members discussed the quality criteria of learning centers, and what is included in a learning center, and how this can be observed. It was determined that the presence of five clearly defined learning centers would be the criterion for a quality rating indicator. The individual program will determine which specific categories of learning centers will be available that provide high quality programming for the children in care.

Task Force Members identified early literacy/reading and curriculum aligned with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards as components of quality within the learning environment.

Task Force Members identified Accrediting bodies that should be recognized (NAEYC, NSACA, City of Madison, Head Start Performance Standards or their equivalent) and which are based on research that supports high quality child care programming.

Task Force Members recognized the importance of learning environments that reflect the values, beliefs and cultural practices of the children in care and their families.

The maximum of 10 points will be awarded to a program that is accredited by a recognized accrediting body. Programs that are not accredited but meet set identified learning environment/curriculum quality criteria can receive between 1 and 9 points.

Carol Maurer moved to accept the Learning Environment/Curriculum category of the Quality Indicators Rating Scale as described above. Kari Stroede seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Professional Practices (maximum of 6 points)

Components of business practices, professional development planning for the center and the staff, and parent involvement were discussed by Task Force Members. After this conversation it was determined that the general category would be identified as Professional Practices and that this category will have three subgroups, that include multiple activities:

- 1.) Professional Development-Includes: staff development plan, written evaluations of staff, etc.
- 2.) Staff Benefits- Includes: health insurance, salary scales, paid leave, retirement, etc.
- 3.) Parental Involvement-Includes: parent conferences, parent newsletters, advisory council, Child and Adult Care Food Program, etc.

A maximum of two points will be awarded within each subgroup. The Task Force Members came to the conclusion that the Professional Practices category should be based on what the program is actually doing for children and families, not on a plan only. The ultimate goal is to identify and reward programs that provide higher quality care.

Dave Edie moved to accept the Professional Practices as a category of the Quality Indicators Rating Scale as described above. Carol Maurer seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Task Force Members Final Vote on the Quality Indicators Rating Scale for Licensed Group Child Care Centers

- Task Force Members reviewed the final Quality Indicators Rating Scale Model for licensed group child care centers:

Tier 1 – licensed child care program

Tier 2 – licensed child care program in “Regulatory Compliance”

Tier 3 - licensed child care program, in Regulatory Compliance that has “earned 5-12 Points”.

Tier 4 – licensed child care program, in Regulatory Compliance that has “earned 13–22 Points”.

Tier 5 - licensed child care program, in Regulatory Compliance that has “earned 23– 30 Points”.

- Task Force Members reviewed the categories and the final maximum points that can be awarded within each category for tiers 3, 4, and 5:

Teacher Qualifications – maximum of 7 points

Director Qualifications – maximum of 7 points

Learning Environment/Curriculum – maximum of 10 points

Professional Practices – maximum of 6 points

The maximum number of points that can be awarded to a licensed group child care center is 30 points.

Jose Martinez moved to accept the Quality Indicators Rating Scale for Licensed Group Child Care Centers as identified by the Task Force above. Judy Mays seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tiered Reimbursement – Licensed Group Child Care Centers

Two decisions need to be made on the Tiered Reimbursement structure for the Quality Indicators Rating System:

- 1.) Where should the base rate (the current maximum payment rate) be set?
- 2.) What should the differential amount be (the percentage increase or decrease in payment between each tier)?

Task Force Members discussed various scenarios of setting the base rate at level two and level three. Additional discussion took place on various percentages to be used for tier level differentials. Jason Bierbrauer (UW-Extension Research Partnership) was able to provide estimates of child care subsidy expenditure based on a set base rate and differentials as requested by individual Task Force Members using the software formulas that had been shared at the 9/13/04 Task Force Meeting.

Task Force discussion included the issue of collection of co-payment as a professional business practice for child care programs. In some areas of the state, lower quality programs may be serving large numbers of subsidized children and not charging the family its share of the cost of care. Some programs use this practice as a marketing technique to attract low-income families. Further discussion took place that in some areas of the state a large percentage of the low income children are served by poor quality care, care that in the future may be rated as meeting level one and level two on the quality indicator rating scale just accepted by the Task Force Members. Task Force Members discussed what payment rates should be made to lower quality care and to higher quality care programs. It was noted that it is not an entitlement to receive the child care subsidy program at a set base rate once a quality indicator rating scale is in place. Instead it was noted that higher payment rates should be made to higher quality programs. Task Force Members indicated that it is possible that the lowest quality child care programs may no longer be able to stay in business. Children who had been attending the lowest quality programs may now fill open slots in higher quality programs that had vacancies due to an over saturation of child care slots in some areas of the state.

Task Force Members discussed the possibility that targeted training and technical assistance for child care programs at levels two and three might be needed to help these programs clearly understand what quality programming looks like, and provide assistance in movement toward providing higher quality programming.

Task Force Members indicated that the Regulatory Compliance definitions and policies will have a direct impact on the implementation and ongoing success of the Wisconsin Quality Indicator Rating System.

Task Force Members agreed that child care programs will need time to begin to understand the Quality Indicator Rating Scale. Timing issues discussed include:

- time to plan for individualized quality improvement planning with a child care program.
- time necessary to implement the quality rating scale system statewide.
- time needed for some programs to move into regulatory compliance
- time needed for programs to be rated in order to become part of the quality indicator rating system.

Task Force Members discussed various differential reimbursement levels. Some members indicated that a 5 percent differential may not be enough of an incentive for child care programs to strive for higher quality. Task Force Members came to the agreement that the base rate should be set at level three to encourage programs to work towards meeting higher quality levels. Task Force Members reviewed the charge of the Task Force to develop a recommendation to improve the quality of child care across the state.

Lisa Furseth moved to set the tiered reimbursement rate base at Level 3 of the Quality Indicators Rating Scale and to set the differential rate as follows:

Tier 1 - 30%

Tier 2 - 5%

Tier 3 Base Rate

Tier 4 + 10%

Tier 5 + 25%

Barb Schuler seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Quality Indicator Rating Scale – Family Child Care

- Family Child Care Provider Qualifications (maximum of 14 points)

Task Force Members discussed the Family Child Care Provider Qualifications, and the value of the Infant Toddler Professional Credential. It was discussed that this credential provides meaningful experiences for an infant/toddler family child care provider, who often is the only adult caregiver in the program. Jane Robinson provided information on The Registry Career Recognition System, and how the completion of an Infant Toddler Professional Credential and the Child Care Administrators Credential are recognized and recorded.

The following family child care provider qualifications and points assigned were recognized by Task Force Members:

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|-----------|--|
| 1 point | Child Development Associate (CDA) or 6 related credits |
| 3 points | Infant Toddler Professional Credential (12 Credits) (IT) |
| 4 points | Child Care Administrators Credential (18 Credits) (AC) |
| 5 points | Related Associate degree |
| 7 points | Related Associate degree AND CDA |
| 9 points | Related Associate degree AND IT or AC |
| 11 points | Unrelated Bachelors degree |
| 12 points | Unrelated Bachelors degree AND IT or AC |
| 13 points | Related Bachelors degree (or higher) |
| 14 points | Related Bachelors degree (or higher) AND IT or AC |

Note: These point values are non-cumulative.

Joyce Mallory moved that the Family Child Care Provider Qualifications as indicated above be approved. Laura Klingelhoets seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Family Child Care Learning Environment/Curriculum (maximum of 10 points)

Task Force Members discussed that the Learning Environment and Curriculum should reflect the licensed group center category components when possible. Each family child care program should include well equipped learning environments, weekly lesson plans should include 15 minutes of reading/early literacy daily and that the program uses a curriculum aligned with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.

The development of a documented quality improvement plan is identified as a quality component within the learning environment. The completion of a self-assessment or assessment through a valid outside source has been designated as a quality indicator and points are awarded for this practice within the learning environment category, with a higher point value awarded for assessment through an outside source. Task Force Member discussion also focused on the law that child care programs should provide an environment that is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Kari Stroede moved to accept the Family Child Care Learning Environment/Curriculum category as described above. Mary Babula seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Professional Practices

Task Force Members discussed the differences between family child care and group center programming. In some cultures, specific credit based instruction in early childhood is not valued at the same level as is experience. A parent chooses a child care setting that reflects their cultural background, and in some instances, it is not appropriate for the parent to request additional credit based instruction for the provider. Discussion centered on how both regularly certified and provisionally certified family child care providers will fit into the Quality Indicators Rating System. Task Force Members reviewed Quality Rating System Principles (Revised August 18, 2004) that indicates that Task Force Members agreed that the Quality Rating System will be "Inclusive of all regulated child care programs". Task Force members agreed that the Quality Rating System should have the goal of becoming a single system for all regulated child care providers. Task Force Members agreed that certified care does not mean lesser quality of care, but instead it is a regulation system based on the number of children in care and originally established as a means for payment in a subsidy system.

Discussion of Task Force Members included the question of which Tier rating should include the completion of a high school degree or its equivalent. Task Force Members were interested in developing the Professional Practices category that reflects the licensed group center category. Mary Babula moved to accept the Family Child Care Professional Practices category to reflect the licensed group categories of Professional Development, Staff Benefits and Parental Involvement. The effect of this motion is to include a high school degree/or the equivalent requirement at Tier 3 and higher. Judy Mays seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tiered Reimbursement – Family Child Care

Task Force Members discussed the tiered reimbursement questions of where to set the base rate and what amount of differential should be used, and came to the decision that the tiered reimbursement rate policy should mirror the licensed group center policy.

Dave Edie moved that the tiered reimbursement base rate be set at level 3 of the Licensed Family Quality Indicator Rating Scale and to:

- Accept the Family Child Care Quality Indicators Rating Scale

Tier 1 – licensed family child care program

Tier 2 – licensed family child care program in "Regulatory Compliance"

Tier 3 - licensed family child care program, in Regulatory Compliance, with a high school degree or the equivalent, that has "earned 5-12 Points".

Tier 4 – licensed family child care program, in Regulatory Compliance, with a high school degree or the equivalent, that has “earned 13–22 Points”.

Tier 5 - licensed child care program, in Regulatory Compliance, with a high school degree or the equivalent, that has “earned 23– 30 Points”.

- and to set the Family Child Care differential rates as follows:

Tier 1 -30%

Tier 2 - 5%

Tier 3 Base Rate

Tier 4 +10%

Tier 5 +25%

Gershia Cogg seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Certified Child Care Tiered Reimbursement

Task Force Members discussed the issue of including regularly certified and provisionally certified providers in the Quality Indicators Rating Scale and provide for Tiered Reimbursement. Task Force Members determined it was necessary to develop a certified Tiered Reimbursement schedule. This schedule will replicate the licensed family tiered reimbursement, but will incorporate the current child care policy reimbursement practices of payment at 75% of the licensed family child care payment for Regularly Certified providers, and payment at 50% of the licensed family child care payment rate for Provisionally Certified providers.

Mike Poma moved to accept the certified provider tiered reimbursement schedule as described above.

Jane Robinson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

October Public Hearing Information

Kath McGurk from the Child Care Section provided Task Force Members information on plans to hold Public Hearing in October. Child Care Section staff request that Task Force Members attend one or more public hearings in October, to provide support for, and demonstrate investment in, the goals of the Quality Indicator Rating System and the Tiered Reimbursement Program. Task Force Members have asked for the following information to share in e-mail format with their represented agencies/organizations:

- Public Hearing notice information (date, place, time, etc.)
- Brief overview of the Task Force recommendations that can provide a focal point for public hearing comment
- Brief description of the role of the Task Force Member at the Public Hearing

Task Force Staff will attend the Public Hearings and will work together to capture comment and develop a summary of comments made at the three separate public hearings, and forward this summary to Task Force Members prior to the November 15th Task Force Meeting.

Task Force Members have requested the following information be sent out prior to the Public Hearing Process:

- Summary of the Quality Indicator Rating System as finalized at the September 20th Task Force Meeting.
- Minutes from the September 20th Task Force Meeting.
- Visual document that provides detail on the Quality Indicator Rating Scale, Category components and Tiered Reimbursement Structure.
- Summary of Implementation Details identified by Task Force Members at the September 13th and 20th meetings.
- Draft Task Force Quality Indicator Rating System Report when available.

Future Meeting Dates

The following meetings have been scheduled:

Public Hearing Dates:

Friday, October 15, 2004 – LaCrosse

WECA Conference -LaCrosse Center, 300 Harborview Plaza, South Exhibition Hall, LaCrosse

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 20, 2004 – Milwaukee Area Technical College

700 W. State Street, Milwaukee, Room S120, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 26, 2004 – Wausau – North Central Technical College

1000 W. Campus Drive, Wausau, Room D101, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

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| Monday, November 15, 2004 | 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. | Review Public Hearing Comments |
| Monday, December 6, 2004 | 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. | Final Recommendation for the Governor |

9 20 04 Task Force Meeting Minutes

Kath McGurk

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